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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the characteristics and functions of governmental libraries and information systems which contribute to the decision making activities of governmental institutions. It explores the governmental planning process to outline sources of information, subject specialities, information formats, classes of users, and information techniques pertinent to governmental libraries for the development of appropriate supporting services. (RAA)

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The Development of governmental libraries as a basis for governmental information systems

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENTAL LIBRARIES AS A BASIS FOR GOVERNMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Since 1975 three factors have decisively coined the stress of the governmental libraries by the authorities to which they belong.

The independence of governmental libraries is due to three library-functions:

1. building-up and enlargement of the stock
2. cataloguing of the stock
3. use of the stock

One of its main tasks is in the possibilities of using the stock. Contrary to general libraries there are many advantages; any questions can be answered very quickly (either by mail or by telephone), within the library the journals are completed to an up-to-date-status, material can quickly be collected for legislative or administrative activities.

Therefore they are extended as a basic net for governmental information systems.

The installment of an information system which continually reports about the contents of governmental documents and which compiles those informations systematically, would be a first help for the decision-activity of governemtnal institutions.

Any scientific information system of special information system consists of three main scopes: Information production, information transfer and information consumption. For the work in a library the main interest lies in the field of document-transfer. Such a system is defined by the work routine and by the work task.

The first factor mentioned above is due to the development in the information sciences which has gradually grown from a central

work-up of informations to a decentralized keeping-up, processing and spreading of information services in a stand-alone operation.

This has led to a point where governmental libraries should not invest money, time and personnel for the preservation and rebuilding of their stocks but should try to extend their informational mediation as competent and technological clearing authorities.

A clearing authority is an institution which collects, keeps up and disposes of dates and documents about planned, current and completed works on research and development and converts them into information systems.

Any governmental information system should have the following functions:

1. reception
2. adaptation
3. concentration
4. storage
5. combination
6. service

Governmental documentation as a means of governmental planning and decision is an important task that should be taken into consideration when talking about government information systems. All connections between groups and groups, governments and governments are incorporated in such a documentation. Any solution in connection with the government should be: with regard to the future, systematic and overlapping.

Each governmental planning consists of the following criteria:

1. there are conflicts of interests
2. the aims are not clear
3. competencies are not clear
4. reaching out of the department
5. a cooperative aiming process at the same time
6. open-end-process
7. innovative (New solutions are wanted)
8. purposeful for one special part of the problem

Therefore each department should have a planning group in order to change governmental planning into operative planning. Such a group should try to get a continuous survey on the status of planned tasks, a survey on the means and priorities, should prognosticate tasks and costs and should have plenty of scope.

The solution of governmental tasks is possible only within the governmental planning process- with the background of dates from the special field.

The decision process has to be organized in such a way that the exact informations are ready at the exact dates. A great number of dates--stations is necessary. They take the informations to the point of decision.

The second scope concerns the incorporation of the agencies in national, regional and international systems. It should be the task of governmental libraries to concentrate on competence and technology. As we do not live in a static but dynamic world the continually changing environment asks for a continual process of new orientation. Anybody who is involved in the building up of a society has to learn to live with new circumstances, new events and new dates. The process which takes up information on a new conflict situation or a social event and during which the information is

used in any possible way (e.g. taking up, storing, comparing, concentrating) is a governmental documentation and information process.

It is very important to incorporate all relevant dates for this new orientation. Those information sources for governmental libraries could be information on:

1. personalities
2. groups(Organizations)
3. territorial authorities
4. international authorities
5. results of theoretical and empirical research, mass media, emotional factors

Furthermore, any dates of the social sciences and of social experience are of interest for a governmental information system.

Political sciences, legal sciences and economic sciences are the main points in the classification of the social sciences. On the other hand, in social experience, there are three main points which have to be taken into consideration:

1. politics
2. public law
3. national economy

Several catagories of information sources should be incorporated in the building-up of a governmental information system:

1. authorized papers
2. reports
3. books
4. journals
5. periodicals

6. new services
7. documentation of pictures
8. microfilms and microfiches
9. electromagnetic data media

As far as users of such information systems are concerned, three main groups are incorporated:

A. government
B. Ministers
C. Institutions

Any governmental library should be able to provide them, and all other possible users, with the information they are looking for. Those informations may be:

1. research for documents
2. research for facts
3. questions about current problems
4. quick information about events and personalities
5. questions about connections
6. questions about certain governemental problems

It is very important to coordinate all objectives requirements with the subjective requirements in order to be able to offer the most detailed information possible.

The government library should be able to provide the government and the administration with any information that may be useful to them. The library should therefore be able to:

1. provide informations autonomously and continually (automatized production of bibliographies on law, politics and economics) automatized production of indexes of dates of special fields, automatized production of cumulative, subject index and language index, edition of organ on political speeches)

2. To give continuous information but only on request or order (partly automatized text-documentation to the political situation, the present economic situation and the present legal situation; periodical information for users about themes they are interested in; information retrieval...and so on)

   Information retrieval is one of the mostimportant parts of an information system because documents and informations can quickly be found for the asking. It is not relevant whether the questions are asked directly by the user or whether they are answered by retrospective research.

Concerning the building and spatial equipment a decentralization has succeeded in the respective local government region, which means that comparatively small main libraries have the functions of central government bodies.

Furthermore, the traditional library, information, and documentation services can be carried out at the actual information working place of the final user.

These services should offer:

1. service that a governmental library is able to give (books, periodicals, journals...)
2. information on subjects the government or any governmental body is interested in (personal dates, events...)
3. documentation (detailed information in every possible form)

There are many functions which should be fulfilled by a governmental information system. Among them are:

1. central office of the inner integration
2. coordinating office to all information systems within a country and with those of other countries
3. cooperation office for connection systems
4. clearing authority for the use of the system

For the coordinating and cooperating functions many institutions should be contacted, such as libraries, documentation centres, archives, data centres, clearinghouses and so on.

The conclusion to all these considerations is:

a governmental information system is able to fill tasks which could not be filled up to now. It will be up to the future users to find out the qualities of such new information system within a governmental library. It will be fully operational when it will have been used for a longer period.